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South Carolina: '27-In-7' Every Day

Completing 27 years worth of work in seven.

In 1999, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) initiated a program called “27-In-7,” whereby it was charged with completing work that normally would have taken 27 years in just seven. Today, the program is nearing completion – there are only about 20 projects still to be finished out of 200 – but with the new SAFETEA-LU funding, the temporary “27-In-7” workload will soon be the norm at SCDOT.

“Before the “27-In-7” program, we were at roughly \$300 million a year in construction projects. Now we’re over \$600 to \$700 million a year and that’s going to be maintained due to the new bill,” says Director of Construction Danny Shealy.

A LOT TO HANDLE

Shealy explains that in order to meet the original “27-In-7” mandate, SCDOT determined that they would handle 100 of the projects, but for the other hundred, they would need help. SCDOT then divided the state and contracted with two outside firms, which the DOT calls Construction Resource Managers (CRMs) – Fluor Daniel handled the western part of the state, and Parsons Brinckerhoff handled the eastern part. Both CRMs were using Primavera for their project management, and says Shealy, “We learned from them and we said, “That’s just what *we* need.”

By 2002, Shealy had begun implementing Primavera to track construction projects. “I initially wanted to use it to track the progress of the contractors, to be able to forecast when I would need consultant help for Construction, Engineering & Inspection (CE&I) work when we couldn’t handle it with our own forces, and to forecast payments for contracts that we had under construction.

“But when the Preconstruction group saw what I was trying to do, they realized that it would be helpful to them as well. Preconstruction then set up a Programs Control Unit, and ultimately shifted the group’s focus to project delivery.”

COORDINATING ITS EFFORTS

Shealy explains that prior to Primavera, SCDOT didn’t have a solution for managing CE&I work. “Preconstruction had its own in-house program, but they were the only ones using it and we wanted something that would cover all aspects – pre-construction, construction and even maintenance in the future. Now with Primavera, we can see what’s coming down the pike to us in construction.”

EVERY DAY IS ‘27-IN-7’

The new SAFETEA-LU transportation funding is going to

require SCDOT to manage programs like it did under the “27-In-7” program. Again, most of the project management and design will be handled by the DOT, and the rest will be undertaken with the help of consultants. “And, they will all be working cooperatively via Primavera software,” says Shealy.

Today, the Project Controls Unit has all the projects in the DOT’s five-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan loaded into Primavera. “We want to have all these projects updated in Primavera by our environmental group, our road design group, bridge design, right of way – all the pre-construction areas to get the plans developed and ready to go to construction.”

The CRMs will update their schedules using the dashboard



Photo courtesy of SCDOT

An urban diamond interchange – Routes I-26 and US 378.

in Primavera, and those schedules will then be submitted to Program Controls where they will be downloaded into Primavera.

Going forward, all consultants and contractors will be able to access the dashboard and all data will be housed in one database managed by SCDOT.

“Anything over \$5 million is now required to be done in Primavera,” says Shealy. “Contractors’ schedules must indicate pay items and line items, they must be resource loaded and they have to produce a payout curve.”

SCDOT will also be relying on Primavera for documenting a history of where each project started, where it is currently, and where it will finish.

“What used to be a best guess has now become measurable data that allows us to forecast real numbers.” »